

# Parade

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## Stay Healthy



### True or false: Poison ivy isn't contagious.

True. Poison ivy is caused by contact with the plant's oil, and while blisters on the skin contain fluid that has inflammatory cells and proteins, "the cells can't be transmitted to another person," says Ava Shamban, M.D., assistant clinical professor of dermatology at UCLA. But you can "catch" poison ivy if you touch clothing that has brushed against the plant and has oil on it. When working outside, wear long pants, shirts with sleeves, boots, and gloves, and then wash exposed duds in hot water.

### 2 True or false: Eating garlic repels mosquitoes.

False. Many people claim that garlic

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breath can ward off the pesky critters, but the most effective solution remains DEET-based sprays. Just avoid the eyes and nose, and don't spray children under 2 months old, says Joe Conlon, technical adviser for the American Mosquito Control Association.

Not a DEET fan? Look for a repellent that contains picaridin (marketed as Cutter Advanced). And beware if you're female, blond, overweight, active, or fidgety: Research shows that mosquitoes are drawn to people with these characteristics.

### 3 True or false: Sparklers are safer than other fireworks.

False. "More accidents happen with sparklers than with any other type of fireworks," says Jeremy Fine, M.D., a Los Angeles-based internist. Always supervise kids and have them wear gloves when holding sparklers; avoid lighting more than one at a time; and stash the remains in dirt or water so a hot sparkler can't start a fire.

—Karen Asp